**Cirque du Soleil - Journey of Man**

Cirque du Soleil is known all over the world for offering a dramatic mix of circus arts and street entertainment – on a high quality level. They describe their show “Journey of Man”, a combination of their artistry and film, as a “celebration of human spirit”. It retraces the stages of human development – starting with birth and ending with maturity. Each stage is interpreted by an artistic act, set in different sceneries and interpreted with different thoughts on what is happening. With “Journey of Man” Cirque du Soleil provides us with breathtaking scenes, sensational artistry and a sense for what is important in life and makes it precious, as well as with a conscious mind for our own journey of life.

First, we see an interpretation of the beginning of a human life - giving us a taste of what we felt when we were born and everything was new and unknown. It starts in outer space, where mystic but also playful music puts the viewer into a meditative mood. Then, melodic drumming in an archaic cave and white fog, accompany a child’s birth. It is dressed in white, depicting the innocence and unselfconsciousness of a new life that just left the preterm stage. The child disappears in a cloud of bright blue light, taking the viewer with him into an aquatic realm, evoking memories of the basic principles of our existence, as water is said to be the source of life. An outstanding underwater ballet accompanies this scene, which is mainly an invitation to let our thoughts flow and concentrate on feelings and emotions we experience. As a newborn, the only thing one can rely on is what one experiences. It is like the underwater scene – you float in a sea of emotions and you can only observe the things that happen, without being able to take actions.

In the next stage of development a child starts to explore its surroundings, incited by its own will to learn. The scene is set in jungle scenery. He is dressed like an explorer, left with instincts – incorporated by a man and a woman in brightly colored costumes – as his only guides. On his way he gets to know fear, but also learns that it has two other friends: courage and wonder. However, we know that we distinguish ourselves from animals because we do not only rely on our instincts. So as the journey continues, the boy leaves his two companions behind. When he sees a man dancing with a large metal frame cubic in the desert, he decides to follow him and therefore finally leaves his childhood guides behind and enters the next stage: adolescence.

Subsequently we, we learn what is essential in life. We are taken to a garden, where the young man watches two figures, a man and a woman, dancing in a pond. Their movements are strong, but also very sensual and delicate. The boy grows into a man and understands that the harmony expressed by the dancers is what makes us complete. He calls it love. Love is something every human being strives for. However, as the scene shows us, one can be mislead and think that money can buy you anything. This is incorporated by a diabolic red figure in stilts, turning the young man’s hat into a golden hat.

As the final stage of adulthood arrives, the viewer finds himself in an elaborately decorated room, where man reflects his life and judges it as successful. Nevertheless, childhood dreams and doubts he does not want to see visit him. They are incarnated by a little girl and a group of dancers. Reluctant at first, he then sits to watch their highly acrobatic and vivid dance. It evokes memories of the man’s youthful nature, which he kept hidden over the years. He lets go of the wealth and worldly things that prevented him from his youthful joy and comes to see clearly what accompanies our journey through life: dreams, faith and love.

“Journey of Man” is a breathtaking example for a very different way to make people think. The journey through the various stages of a human being’s development tries to sweep us off our feet – not only with artistic performances, but also with the great truth that lies within it. You only have to let yourself go and follow the boy’s way. It does not only address one’s imagination, but also all of one’s senses and emotions. It shows us quite plainly the experiences of growing up are true for all of us. Concluding, it leaves us wondering about our own journey and the circle of life - making the whole performance a journey of discovering ourselves.